तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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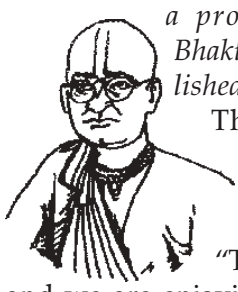
The Ancestral Well

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada

Upākhyāne Upadeśa *is a collection of short stories with explanations that were commonly used by Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Prabhu, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, it was first published in 1940.*



There was a village pandit who was very much devoted to his departed father. The pandit used to say, "The father is God incarnate, and we are enjoying all earthly pleasures by his mercy only. I do not accept any other creator or Godhead except my father." His favorite verse that he used to often recite was:

pitā svargaḥ pitā dharmaḥ pitā hi paramaṁ tapaḥ
pitari prītim āpanne prīyante sarva devatāḥ

One's father is heaven, one's father is religion, and pleasing one's father is the ultimate penance. That person who loves his father is dear to all of the gods.

Chanting the name of his father, meditating on his father's image, and making offerings to his ancestral forefathers, were his daily rituals.

The great-grandfather of this pandit had made a well for his family's use. In the past, the water from this well was famous as the sweetest and clearest well in the village. However, after about one hundred and fifty years and three or four generations of the family had passed, the water of the well had become stagnant and putrid. It was full of mud, filth, and many decomposed plants, and was no longer suitable for drinking or general use. One or two dead frogs also added to the decomposed matter in the water. As such, it became smelly and completely infested with deadly bacteria.

Devoted to his father, the pandit used to daily drink water from this well dug by his great-grandfather. His father had never taken water from any other tank or river in the village, so the pandit would not allow his family members to drink any other water except from the ancestral well. The pandit had a number of sons and grandsons, all of whom died from various diseases. Eventually, his wife also died of a contagious disease and the pandit himself suffered from many ailments. Since there were a number of other tube wells in the village and the Ganga River was flowing only a few miles away from there, everyone repeatedly advised the pandit to stop using the water from that contaminated well and to drink from the other wells or the Ganga.

After some time, all of the pandit's family members died due to his obstinacy and

next column ☞

fanatical attachment to his forefather's well. At last the local authorities came to destroy the well to ensure good health in the village. When the pandit saw them coming, out of stubbornness and sentimental loyalty to his ancestral forefathers, he sat down on the well to block their razing of it. In that position he looked so obstinate that it appeared to the authorities that not even royal power could destroy the well.

PURPORT

Persons who are adamant in getting initiated from a particular ancestral caste goswami also demonstrate such an obstinate attitude. Due to continual degradation of behavior and dignity in their line, persons claiming to be kula-gurus or spiritual masters simply based on ancestral tradition may not be truly qualified. When one's forefathers took initiation into a particular goswami line, at that time the water in that well was clean and good for drinking. At that time the person who gave the mantra was a true *sad-guru* or a real *goswāmī*, and the well water there was clean and healthy. However, in time some deviation entered. Despite this, the members of the family, in the name of adherence to their forefathers, continued to drink what had by then become poisonous water from the same well. This means taking shelter of a so-called guru who is a conditioned soul attached to social considerations. By taking shelter of such a person one never obtains eternal auspiciousness. Many persons say that it is an offense to reject a kula-guru. Speaking this kind of contaminated *śāstra,* they accept someone who is not bona-fide. A doctor's son may not have a medical degree. However, considering that because he is the son of a doctor he must also be a doctor, ignorant persons take a diarrhea patient to him. By his unqualified treatment the patient will never be cured, and rather will die. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used to say, "Lazy persons don't take the effort to walk some distance to the market; they prefer the convenience of purchasing from a local, low-class person who lives near their house. Although the only *dāl* available at the shop near one's house is of inferior quality, difficult to digest, and takes a long time to cook, still due to laziness one prefers to purchase it there. An intelligent person, however, searches for good quality *dāl*, goes to the place where it is available, and thereby obtains it. Those who are careless about their own welfare, extremely lazy, and guided by the pleasure principle never take the pain to search out a bona-fide spiritual master.

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The Bee and the Fly

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I am pleased to hear that you are concerned for the development of your neophyte godbrothers and godsisters. So just try to help them by giving them Krishna Consciousness and the best way to do this is to set the example by being very enthusiastic to do anything and everything to please Krishna, even if we may have to make some sacrifice. Follow the regulative principles very strictly, and be ready to tolerate all kind of setbacks and disappointments. The difference between a devotee and a non-devotee is like the bee and the fly; the bee always is attracted by honey and flies go to the open sores. So the devotee is only attracted by the good qualities in other people and does not see their faults. He is a friend to everyone and in this way he finds his life sublime. Of course, we are not ourselves perfect, so sometimes there may be something, and we may lose our enthusiasm to do something — but these things come and go and you should not bother very much with them. Just be attached to Krishna and try to always think how to please Him. He will personally rescue His devotee from all kinds of unfavorable situations. Even we may not like to do the work, but if we work very hard for Krishna soon we lose

our attachment and become satisfied just to be serving Krishna, and as long as at least 16 offenseless rounds daily are being chanted, know it for certain that our anxieties will disappear very soon. ✿

— Letter to Badarinarayana Das, 18 November 1971.

Good and Bad Association

Mahabharata, Vana Parva 1.9-32

After having been defeated at dice and provoked by the wicked-minded sons of Dhritarastra, the Pandavas along with their counselors left Hastinapur and set out in a northerly direction. Hearing that they were leaving, the pious citizens of Hastinapura who could not bear separation from those saintly kings set out after them. The citizens did not want to live in a kingdom where Duryodhana and his followers ruled. They thus petitioned the Pandavas, "All blessings upon the sons of Pandu! Where will you go, leaving us in grief? We are distressed learning that your cruel enemies have deceitfully taken your kingdom away. It is not right for you to forsake us; we are your loving subjects. We do not wish to meet destruction by living in the kingdom of a bad king. Please listen as we describe the merits and demerits obtained by association with what is good and with what is bad:

apo vastraṁ tilān bhūmiṁ gandho vāsayate yathā
puṣpāṇām-adhivāsena tathā saṁsarga-jā guṇāḥ

As cloth, water, sesame seeds, and earth become scented by association with flowers, similarly, personal qualities are born from association.

moha-jālasya yonir hi mūḍhair eva samāgamaḥ
ahany ahani dharmasya yoniḥ sādhu-samāgamaḥ

Entanglement in delusion is born from association with fools, but daily association with *sādhus* produces virtue.

tasmāt prāñjaiś ca vṛddhaiś ca śuddha-bhāvais-tapasvibhiḥ
sadbhiś ca saha saṁsargaḥ kāryo dharma-parāyaṇaiḥ

Therefore those who are virtuously inclined should associate with persons who are worshipful, wise, honest, pure at heart, and detached.

yeṣāṁ triṇy avadātāni vidyā yoniś ca karma ca
te sevyāstaiḥ samāsyā hi śāstrebhyo 'pi garīyasī

The service and association of those whose knowledge, birth (or the second birth of initiation), and behavior are all pure is certainly superior to the scriptures.

nirārambhā hy api vayaṁ puṇyaśīleṣu sādhuṣu
puṇyam evāpnuyāmeha pāpaṁ pāpopasevanāt

Devoid of religious acts as we are, we shall gain religious merit by association with the righteous, just as one incurs sin by associating with the sinful.

asatāṁ darśanāt sparśāt sañjalpāc ca sahāsanāt
dharmācārāḥ prahīyas te na ca sidhyanti mānavāḥ

The sight, touch, association, or interaction of sinful persons causes one to lose purity of mind.

buddhiś ca hīyate puṁsāṁ nīcaiḥ saha samāgamāt
madhyamair-madhyatāṁ yāti śreṣṭhatāṁ yāti cottamaiḥ

Association with mean and low persons makes one's intelligence mean and low, association with ordinary persons makes it ordinary, and association with the best of souls makes it sharp and pure.

ye guṇāḥ kīrtitā loke dharma-kāmārtha-saṁśrayāḥ
lokācārānusaṁyuktā vedoktāḥ śiṣṭa-sammatāḥ

te yuṣmāsu samastāś ca vyastāś caiveha sad-guṇāḥ
icchāmo guṇavan-madhye vastaṁ śreyo 'bhikāṅkṣaṇaḥ

Those attributes found in the Vedas pertaining to religious qualities and extolled by the wise exist simultaneously in you. O sons of Pandu, desiring our own welfare we wish to live with you in the forest." — Texts 23-31. ✿

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Prayers to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava texts 403-406

by Sanatan Goswami

In his purport to Cc. antya 4.222, Srila Prabhupada mentions Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava *or* Līlā-stava*:*

The Bhakti-ratnākara *refers to the following books by Srila Sanatan Goswami: (1) the* Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, (2) the* Hari-bhakti-vilāsa *and his commentary known as* Dig-darśinī*, (3) the* Līlā-stava *and (4) the commentary on the Tenth Canto of* Śrīmad Bhāgavatam *known as*

Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī. *Sanatan Goswami compiled many, many books, all with the aim of describing how to serve the principal deities of Vrindavan — Govinda and Madana-gopal.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava *is a long prayer written by Srila Sanatan Goswami describing Krishna. It consists of 108 obeisances to different forms of Krishna. For many years this book was lost to the world until it was rediscovered by Sri Haridas Das of Nabadwip (1898-1957). Following the order of his guru, Haridas Das was engaged in finding and publishing old books of the Goswamis. It is said that although he tried his best to find a copy of Srila Sanatan Goswami's* Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava, *he was unable to do so. This caused him unbearable grief and he gave up sleep and cried day and night. One day he sat by the bank of the Yamuna in Vrindavan and began crying, "Ha prabhu Sanatan! Ha prabhu Sanatan! Suddenly he saw a bundle floating by in the river. Curious, he waded out and picked it up. Upon opening the bundle he saw amidst many other papers an original copy of* Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava *in Sanatan Goswami's personal handwriting. Haridas Das happily printed the book. The original copy of that book in Sanatan Goswami's writing is still present today at the Haribol Kutir in Nabadwip.*

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śrīmac-caitanya-deva tvāṁ vande gaurāṅga-sundara
śacī-nandana māṁ trāhi yati-cūḍāmaṇe prabho

O beautiful, fair complexioned Lord Chaitanyadeva, I offer respectful obeisances unto You. O Lord, O delight of Sachi-devi and crest-jewel of the *sannyāsīs*, please protect me!

ājānu-bāho smerāsya nīlācala-vibhūṣaṇa
jagat-pravartita-svādu-bhagavan-nāma-kīrtana

O Lord Chaitanyadeva! With smiling face and long arms You are the ornament of Nilachal (Jagannath Puri). You preach the glories of the nectarean Holy Name of the Lord throughout the universe.

advaitācārya-saṁślāghin sārvabhaumābhinandaka
rāmānanda-kṛta-prīta sarva-vaiṣṇava-bāndhava

O Lord Chaitanyadeva, You praise Adwaita Acharya and You delight Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. You are affectionate to Ramananda Ray, and You are the friend of all the *vaiṣṇavas*.

ṣrī-kṛṣṇa-caranāmbhoja-premāmṛta-mahāmbudhe
namas te dīna-dīnaṁ māṁ kadācit kiṁ smariṣyasi

O Lord Chaitanyadeva, O great ocean of the nectar of pure love for the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, I offer respectful obeisances unto You. Do You sometimes remember me, the most wretched of all wretched people? ❀

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A JUBILANT FESTIVAL

Srila Rupa Goswami's
Śrī Govinda-virudāvalī 64

nāmāni praṇayena te sukṛtināṁ tanvanti tuṇḍotsavaṁ
dhāmāni prathayanti hanta jalada-śyāmāni netrāñjanam
sāmāni śruti-śaṣkulīm muralikā-jātāny alaṅkurvate
kāmānirvṛta-cetasām iha vibho nāśāpi naḥ śobhate

O Almighty Lord, now that we have become Your devotees, Your holy names have affectionately created a jubilant festival in our mouths. Your bodily splendor, like a dark rain cloud, has become the black ointment of our eyes, and the music of Your flute has become the ornament of our ears. Material desires are no longer attractive to us. ❀

— Translated by Sri Kusakratha Das.